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AQIM Handbook

Southern Border–Vehicles

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Background

This pathway covers passenger vehicles entering the United States via Southern border crossings. Information must be recorded on a worksheet even if no agricultural item(s) are found.

Pathway Monitoring Maintenance

Port managers and local AQIM coordinators are responsible for ensuring that monitoring activities are being performed and being performed properly. To help with reviewing the status of monitoring activities, refer to [Appendix L—Pathway Monitoring Maintenance](#). This appendix contains a checklist of question port managers and local AQIM coordinators should periodically answer to ensure proper monitoring of each designated pathway at their work locations. See [Figure E-1](#). The questions review the following topics:

- ◆ Random sampling
- ◆ Proportional sampling
- ◆ Adequate sampling
- ◆ Accurate and complete data
- ◆ Working risk committees
- ◆ Local support

Southern Border– Vehicles Worksheet

There is one worksheet for recording information gathered from your inspection of Southern Border—Vehicles for the purpose of AQIM. The form is available as a fillable form t:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/manuals/port/pdf_files/AQIM_in_PDF/Southern_Border_Vehicle.pdf

Data Collection using Agriculture Quarantine Activity System (AQAS)

For detailed instructions on data collection, access the AQAS Users Guide at the following address:

<https://mokcs14.aphis.usda.gov/aqas/help/index.html>

Survey Results and How To Use Them

AQIM activities have been put into place to develop baseline data to help answer two basic questions:

1. What is the threat of agricultural pests approaching work locations?
2. How effective is the AQI program at managing this threat?

Preliminary results for Southern border vehicle surveys provide a general answer for Question 1. That is, there are varying rates at which prohibited agricultural materials approach the work locations. These prohibited agricultural materials are what can have agricultural pests. Surveys show that at some work locations about 1 percent of the vehicles carried prohibited items in the past year. At other ports, surveys show that passengers and vehicles are carrying prohibited items at a higher rate, sometimes near 6 percent.

These percentages are a rough approximation of agricultural pest threat. Further analysis of the monitoring data is needed to determine the risk associated with the prohibited items approaching the work location. The origin and destination of the prohibited items is important to determine risk levels. Also, whether or not the prohibited item carries an actual agricultural pest is analyzing risk.

Analyses of the monitoring data need to occur at several levels of PPQ. At the work locations, PPQ personnel need to study what the data means and answer the first Question for their specific location. Analysis tools are available to help with these analyses which are explained in the next subsection. At the same time, PPQ holds risk analysis workshops around the country to introduce risk analysis concepts. At some work locations, teams of PPQ officers and managers form Risk Management Teams to look at monitoring data and other data, which are normally collected at the location.

At other locations, analyses of monitoring data occur to establish rates at which quarantined items and agricultural pests are approaching the borders of States, areas of the country, and the United States.

Once baseline rates are well established, PPQ can use the monitoring data as a baseline to answer the second basic question: How effective is the AQI program at managing the risk of introduction of agricultural pests and diseases? Again, each work location must conduct this type of analysis. AQIM provides a framework which work location can use to carry out the analysis.

Questions to Guide Data Analysis

The following questions are a guide for managers and Risk Management Teams to formulate information around. With the answers, valid decision can be made based on the potential risk of quarantined material and exotic pests and diseases entering a specific pathway. The value of using the monitoring data for decision making is better understood.

1. How many vehicles were selected for the sampling during the survey?

How many vehicles sampled required an action (seizure or other action required as a condition of entry) during the survey?

What is the action approach rate of vehicles requiring action (number of vehicles with one or more items categorized as seized or clean/treatment divided by the total number of vehicles sampled)?

What is the total number of QMIs seized during the survey?

How many seizures (QMIs) came from the samples during the survey?

What is the QMI approach rate of vehicles with prohibited agricultural material (total number of QMIs divided by total vehicles sampled during the survey)?

2. How many pest interceptions (actionable pests) were made from survey samples?

Pest approach rate: what is the rate of pest interceptions in relation to number of vehicles (number of actionable pests divided by number of vehicles in the sample)?

3. How many QMIs were plant material? Meat or animal products?

What is the rate of QMIs for plant material and meat or animal products?

DISCUSSION

Is there a greater risk from plant material or animal products at this work location?

4. How many vehicles were sampled at each crossing? What is the rate of QMI seizures at each crossing? Which crossings have a higher rate of QMIs than vehicles?

DISCUSSION

Are these crossings staffed accordingly? (Example: 30 percent of all vehicles surveyed crossed at Bridge A, 20 percent crossed at Bridge B, and 50 percent crossed at Bridge C. Fifteen (15) percent of the QMIs seized in the work location were seized at Bridge A, 35 percent were seized at Bridge B, and 50 percent were seized at Bridge C.) Vehicles crossing Bridge B could represent the greater risk at the work location and staffing should be reviewed based on this risk.

5. What are the destinations of vehicles transiting the work location? Is local traffic (less than X miles from the work location) considered a high risk? What are the number of QMIs traveling to local locations versus distant locations?

DISCUSSION

Which states are considered high risk States? How can you best select vehicles destined to these high risk States to protect U.S. agriculture?

6. Compare the **action** approach rate for each month of the survey period.

DISCUSSION

Are there easily identified monthly trends when the rate of QMIs transiting the work location are higher?

Are there seasonal trends or do higher rates correlate with national or religious holidays, beginning or end of the school year, vacation periods, etc.?

Do these rates correlate with traditional peak and off-peak travel times?

7. Generate a listing and frequency of items seized. What are the top five items most frequently seized? Which QMIs present the greatest risk?
8. Which vehicles (and at which crossing) were carrying prohibited items? Where were the items foundhand carried bags, passenger compartment, glove box, truck, luggage? Did the passenger declare all prohibited items? Was the passenger traveling alone, as a couple, or family? What was the reason for travelbusiness, vacation, visit family, tour group, school? What type of vehicle was used to transport prohibited items?

DISCUSSION

How do current selectivity factors compare with survey results?

What selectivity factors could be changed or added to identify vehicles carrying prohibited items?

What percentage of resources are dedicated to staffing AQI activities for southern border vehicles at the work location?

